

New glue for fragile families

By MICHELLE LANG

Free Press staff writer

If you take one piece of a mobile away, it throws the whole thing off and ceases to be a mobile.

This is the philosophy of counselor Laurie McKinnon and her colleagues at the Prince George Spousal Assault Program. Ms. McKinnon along with Ida Alleman and Vince Sherry, have developed their counseling program along those lines. They counsel men who have been convicted of assault. But they don't stop there. They also help the women and children affected by abuse.

"The family is like a mobile," explains Ms. McKinnon. "If you take one piece of the mobile away it won't exist as it's meant to be. You need to treat all pieces equally. In a family, if one person is threatened and goes home, the rest of the system is disrupted."

"When we applied for this program, we didn't want to just work with the men," says Ms. Alleman. "We recognize that violence affects every family member. In the past everyone went their separate ways. Men's group was one place and the women were referred elsewhere."

Not any more. In what the three counselors call "a



Mr. Sherry, left, Ms. Alleman and Ms. McKinnon are three counsellors with the Prince George Spousal Assault Program. CHRIS SINNETT/FREE PRESS

new take on an old system," all three clients — the men, women and children — are counseled in one cohesive program. This way everyone learns the "same language," the same new ideas, the same coping skills. The counselors add it prevents the abuser from becoming abusive in different ways once they leave a program — now the whole family can see the cycle and change it.

Women and children go through four weeks of an hour to an hour and a half sessions each. They deal with topics like abuse, anger management, "time outs," parenting, and safety plans.

The men's counseling is

mandatory for those who have been referred to it — men with an abusive criminal record. They go through 32 hours of therapy aimed at such topics as education around abuse, anger management, recognition, and alcohol dependency.

But teaching these skills isn't always easy when your student has just fought a battle with the court system. So before any learning, says Mr. Sherry, the counselors must gain the client's trust.

"All of the men go through a pre-group interview," he explains. "The idea is to get them interested, that they might

learn something from this. They often come here very angry. Many of the men believe they've been abused by the system. We spend time trying to make this a safe, supportive atmosphere."

The system sounds ideal. But does it work? Ms. McKinnon says they've only been holding the sessions for under a year so there are no statistics. Still, she is confident it has had some impact.

"The stats will continue to show not everybody grows. But for the people who come in and want something to be different, we've seen some wonderful things happen."



CASH SAVING COUPONS





FREE Specialty Drink

With the purchase of any snack or meal

1160 3rd Ave
Ph: 614-1611

Expires January 31/98



3 TANS \$9.99 (30 min. max.)

ENTER TO WIN
OUR LADY PEACE
TICKETS

Tan on Tuesdays
for a TOONIE

Tablor Plaza (First & Tablor)
561-0555

Carpet & Upholstery Cleaning

General Flooring Services

964-3823

QUALITY AND SERVICE GUARANTEED

FREE Scotchguard or Antibacterial Treatment for any 1 room or furniture piece with any service.

Two Rooms & Hall Includes 5 rooms, stairs, hall	Whole House Package Includes 5 rooms, stairs, hall	Sofa & Chair Special
\$34.95	\$78.95	\$58.95
Expires Mar. 31/98	Expires Mar. 31/98	Expires Mar. 31/98

Bodyworks Relaxation

- Aromatherapy
- Reflexology
- Reiki
- Relaxation Massage
- Monthly Specials
- Package Offers
- Relaxation Products

January Special
Reflexology Session
\$22.00

At Westwood Plaza
Call Today: **964-9404**

Pizza and Twisty Bread

TWO 10" THREE
TOPPING PIZZAS
AND AN ORDER OF
TWISTY BREAD

\$15.99
+tax

4170 - 15th Ave.
564-6464

\$5 Stork Works \$5

Maternity & Nursing Wear
Indisposables
Cloth Diapers and Baby Products

\$5.00 off any purchase of
\$25.00 or more

Layaway & Gift Wrapping Available

Betty Anne World **562-5330**

The Prince George Free Press Church Directory

A PLEASURE TO PLEASE

For I do always those things that please him. (John 8:29)

This statement could be uttered only by God's unique and perfect Son. The life of Christ was in absolute harmony with the will of the Father. Twice the Gospels record that the Father spoke directly from heaven saying, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

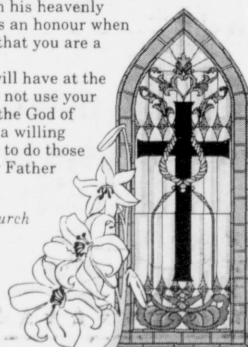
In Matthew 3:17 the Father was well pleased with His Son's OBEDIENCE. This particular commendation came after His baptism, to which our Lord submitted in order to fulfill all righteousness. As our Saviour, Christ kept every command in our place. In doing so He earned a perfect righteousness for us and splendidly pleased our heavenly Father. Christians are called to be like Christ and therefore to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). While saints will never achieve perfection in this life, true sons of God will yearn to please their heavenly Father in all they do.

At Christ's transfiguration in Matthew 17:5 the Father spoke of His good pleasure in His Son's SPEECH. The Father commanded the disciples, "Hear ye Him." Christ's speech, just as His life, was ever directing men toward the Father. The Son came into the world to reveal the Father (John 1:18). Every sermon and every conversation revealed the only true god. The Christian, too, is to show forth his heavenly Father in word and deed. It is an honour when your speech and life "betray" that you are a son of God (Matt. 26:73).

What horrible regrets you will have at the close of life's journey if you do not use your days of opportunity to please the God of your salvation. Therefore, as a willing disciple of Christ, begin today to do those things which will delight your Father which is in heaven.

Heritage Free Presbyterian Church
Jonathan Thomas, Minister

*The views presented in these articles do not necessarily reflect the views held by the other advertisers in this section.



SPRUCELAND BAPTIST CHURCH

*It Does Make a Difference
What You Believe*
See - Acts 16:30,31

Preaching Services
Sunday 10:45am & 6:30pm
CNC Rooms 1-306
Pastor Jeff Hallmark
964-6802

Cornerstone Christian Fellowship

Morning Worship
begins at 10:00 a.m.

Located in Cedars
Christian School
701 N. Nechako Rd.
For more information, call
562-4380

Full Gospel Christian Fellowship

Meets at 2055 - 20th Avenue
10:00am Sunday & 7:00pm Saturday
Ministry for all ages • 563-1003

A church where your need is our concern.

HERITAGE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



"Preaching Christ in
all His fullness for
man in all his need"

963-8859
4020 Balsum Rd.

Sunday School
10:00 a.m.
Morning Service
11:00 a.m.